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THE BIBLICAL WORLD

CONTINUING

The Old and New Testament Student

VOLUME VI.

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WE are quite certain that the readers of the WORLD will receive with pleasure the announcement that the December number of the journal will be entirely devoted to a single subject. In the Christmas season, the subject which most naturally suggests itself for special treatment is that of the Christ. When the thought of all the world moves in a particular direction, it is wise and profitable to take advantage of this fact and to lay emphasis upon that subject on which the minds of men are dwelling. Partly for this reason and in part also because it is possible in this way to accomplish something which could not be accomplished in the ordinary method, the December number of the WORLD will be wholly given up to the consideration of the subject, *Jesus the Christ*, under the following topics :

Introductory : The Scope of the Treatment.

Foreshadowings of The Christ.

The Times of Christ.

The Sources of Information for the Life of Christ.

The Original Text of the Gospels.

The Birth and Childhood of Jesus.

The Home of Jesus—Nazareth.

The Ministry of Christ.

The Teachings of Christ in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

The Teachings of Christ in the Gospel of John.

The Methods of Christ's Teaching.

The Christ in Art.

The Christ in Song.

The Christ in History.

Helps for the Study of the Life of Christ.

Outlines of Important Articles Relating to the Christ.

The articles will be prepared by some of the world's greatest scholars and writers. Full announcement will be found elsewhere. We mention the matter in this place in order that our readers may be prepared for a variation from the usual contents of the journal and also in order that those who so desire may avail themselves of the opportunity offered to render assistance in distributing a document, the reading and study of which must surely be regarded as important and profitable.

A LARGE proportion of one's time is given to the reading of books which, after all, afford no real benefit. If one who has been accustomed to read several books a year will allow his mind to go back rapidly over the books read during six or eight years, does he not feel most keenly that the great majority of these books have proved to be of little or no value? This raises the question whether the ordinary reader of theological literature is sufficiently careful to exercise a proper caution in the matter of reading and purchasing books. One has just so much money in a year to spend for books. How, now, can he spend this to the greatest possible advantage? It is obviously unwise to depend upon the reviews of books published in the weekly religious press for opinions which may be accepted as authoritative. These reviews lack, for the most part, any evidence of discrimination. The reviewer in most cases is accustomed to write notices of books in any and every line of thought. Still further, the merit of a book is generally not the question considered but rather its conformity to a particular standard of opinion. One may not, of course, depend upon the statements of a publisher of a book;

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BOOKS**

for, naturally, it is a part of his function to rate the book as of inestimable value. The name of the author and the title of the book do not always furnish safe criteria, for many a good man writes a bad book, and many a good book has been written by men who have been unknown. An effort must be made, therefore, to secure information of a more exact and authoritative character. The pupils of a teacher often rely upon him to suggest the books which they shall purchase. But few men feel at liberty to call upon a former instructor for such services, realizing that his time is, in most cases, fully occupied. What then, shall the purchaser do? We answer: He must obtain those journals and reviews in which books are noticed at length by specialists in the various departments, who are willing to sign their names to statements published. This is the only safe guide. If our ministers and teachers would read carefully the *critical* notices of books which appear soon after their publication, time and money, in large measure, would be saved.

THERE are many men in the various professions who do not read. We have in mind at this moment, certain pastors who, to our best knowledge, do not read even one or two volumes in a year. These men probably cannot read. They take no pleasure in reading. It is impossible for them so to concentrate their attention upon a book as to derive benefit from its perusal. They are college men, it is true, but as a matter of fact, they did not learn to read in college. Of how many college men this is true. They examine the daily paper, the religious weekly, possibly a magazine; but this is not reading in the strict sense of that term. It may, indeed, be said that few men are readers. Many live upon the food which they are able from time to time to absorb from their fellows. This, of course, is food at secondhand and the life which is nourished by it is stunted and dwarfed. It has no breadth of horizon, no freshness of spirit; it is characterized by dry rot, and after no long period, so far as men can see, it ceases to be. An effort was made in a certain denomination in the state

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of Michigan to persuade the ministers of that denomination to take up a course of reading. The effort failed. The ministers were not interested in the matter. They could not be persuaded to read either individually or collectively. We suppose that the duties of the profession did not leave them time for reading. Alas! Alas!

ACCURACY of statement is not expected of the daily press. There are many who have come to believe that it is not expected of the religious press. There are, of course, good reasons for the failure to be exact when time is lacking to secure a full report and to verify the same. But what shall be said of the inaccuracy when there has been ample opportunity to know the facts, and at the same time a blindness or indifference to the importance of making a fair representation? In a recent number of *THE BIBLICAL WORLD* (August, p. 141), under the caption "Notes and Opinions," a member of the editorial staff presented briefly, without word or comment of his own, an opinion of Professor Briggs in reference to the interpretation of James 3:5. This opinion was cited as a score of other opinions are cited in the journal, as a matter of interest to its readers, who desire to be kept informed of what men are thinking and saying about the Bible. Not a word was written in behalf of the view or against it; and yet the publication of this "opinion" of Professor Briggs has served as a text for two of the religious weeklies of a neighboring state to argue in its columns, not, to be sure, in reference to the truth or falsity of the opinion, but rather in reference to the opinion of the managing editor of the *WORLD*. Neither of the worthy combatants read the published statement closely enough to see what it was. Both entered into the conflict of discussion upon the supposition that an editorial statement had been made for which the editor should be held responsible. In a score or more of cases which have come to our personal knowledge within a year, criticism and discussion have in this manner been built upon an utter misunderstanding of the statement and of its immediate context. Shall we be compelled to excuse the weekly religious press upon

the same ground urged for excusing the daily press? Or is it true that, as some have thought, religion and accuracy may not be combined?

THE interest in the lectures of Professor Bruce, delivered at The University of Chicago during the Summer Quarter, has been widely extended. No course of lectures in recent years has been more thoroughly discussed. The lectures, as will be seen from the subjects, "Evolution," "Agnosticism," "Foundations of Christian Belief," deal with the fundamentals of our Christian faith. The large and increasing attendance from first to last shows the deep interest felt in the discussion, alike by students and ministers. These lectures had not before been delivered in public. How soon their publication may be expected cannot be stated. Elsewhere in this number an outline statement of the ground covered by Professor Bruce is indicated. The books of Professor Bruce have made him known to all Americans who read theological books. That minister who has not read *The Training of the Twelve* betrays an indifference to modern thought which is unpardonable. The main characteristics of Professor Bruce as a thinker and writer are, (1) the extreme thoroughness which is everywhere apparent, items of the most minute character being employed to admirable purpose; (2) his fairness toward those with whom he differs in opinion,—his ability to set forth the side of the opponent being remarkable; (3) the reverential spirit which pervades every discussion, and (4) the simplicity of presentation, which makes even the most abstruse subject clear. It has been a great privilege to listen from day to day to the magnificent utterances from the mouth of a man of such experience. Without any question this course of lectures has marked a crisis in the thinking of many of those who have been in attendance. The influence of the lectures can never be estimated. It has been a rare privilege which has thus been enjoyed, and the coming of Professor Bruce to America must be regarded as a most significant event, occurring as it does just at this time in the religious history of the American churches.

THE study of most men is general, not special. This is as it should be. A large amount of nonsense has been uttered in reference to special study. Only a few comparatively have had an opportunity for such study, and these few often engage in special study without having done that amount of general study which would fit them to gain the highest results from their special study. A bird's-eye view of a subject, or of a division of a subject, is all that most of us may be able to obtain. How vastly important, therefore, that such a view should be in the main correct. But such an outline view is necessary also to the work of the specialist. It is pitiable to see a man undertake the work of the specialist in study or in the activities of life who has no conception of the relation of his particular work to that of others engaged in the same general field. General study has, therefore, a double function: (1) To do for the general student all that can be done for him; and (2) to serve as the preliminary work for the special student. The experience of the writer in connection with an outline course on the History of Prophecy during the summer, in which there was undertaken a general survey of the whole prophetic field in twelve weeks, with men who had never before studied prophecy, has satisfied him beyond any doubt (1) that such a survey at the beginning of work in a department is helpful in pointing out the great outlines of thought and history, and in stimulating an interest which might not be aroused if, at the beginning, the work were of a more minute character; (2) that such an introduction to the subject is the best preparation for more exact work in any division of that subject. There are disadvantages in such a piece of work, especially those which grow out of the feeling that the work being done is superficial. But when we come to consider the matter, what work may not be called superficial? Yet, if the work is conducted with the understanding that the student is obtaining only the barest outline, and that questions are all the time being raised which must be settled after more serious study, no harm need come to the student who does such work. Too many of us fail to obtain a conception of the relative proportion of things. It is as wrong

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to magnify unduly a small thing as to minimize unduly a great thing. The searcher for truth finds it only when he is enabled to see events and ideas in their proper perspective. It is not too much to say that many of our so-called specialists fail utterly in this regard. A great specialist may be the narrowest man in the world. Is the instruction of our institutions of learning tending too much in this direction?